College of Education and Social Services National Writing Project in Vermont

Dear Administrator,

If you are wondering how to address low test performance or other, related dilemmas without creating an entire "teach to the test curriculum," we have a suggestion.

This year The National Writing Project in Vermont is offering a special program for our Teacher Consultants to help improve writing and writing instruction in their own schools. The program is based on developing Study Groups.

This approach is based on the following principles of professional development:

- Enhancement of teachers' understanding of teaching and learning.
- Collaboration and collegial exchange.
- Genuine inquiry into school-wide issues.
- Data collection to enhance understanding and guide practices.
- Valuing of site-based knowledge and experience.
- Development of a learning community.

(Adapted from T. Guskey, "What Makes Professional Development Effective." *Kappan*, June 2003.)

A study group is a useful way for educators to look together at a dilemma (such as poor performance on NECAP). A group of teachers will focus on an issue and read about, talk about and try out ways to address this problem using sound, research based practices that equip students to be authentic writers.

If you have an NWP-VT Teacher Consultant in your school, please ask him or her about this study group initiative. If you do not have a Teacher Consultant in your school, contact NWP-VT to see how we might help you set up a study group with a TC from your area.

Please contact NWP-VT for more information.

Sincerely,

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